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# Background

The virtual TSAG meeting (25-29 October 2021) received some concerns, questions, and proposals concerning the SPCG such as balance of representatives, participation of observers, rotating chairmanship, purpose of SPCG vs SPCG terms of reference, SPCG initiative on the outreach process on AI, SPCG landscape, collaboration between SG20 and J-SCTF, and reporting of J-SCTF; see [Annex A](#_Annex_A_ITU-T) for the text containing the entire points with all details. Other comments raised the need to involve ITU-T study groups and/or their leadership in the works of the SPCG.

TSAG invited the SPCG Chair to respond to the raised concerns and questions.

In addition, several TSAG members proposed to see an activity report prepared which reports on the SPCG activities and achievements since the beginning of the SPCG.

TSAG agreed that the TSAG representatives in SPCG with support from TSB prepare an activity report of the SPCG until the January 2022 TSAG meeting.

This report provides information on SPCG activities and achievements since its inception, addresses the raised issues on concerns, questions and proposals.

Note – An assessment of SPCG’s activities is found in separate report in [TSAG-TD1282](https://www.itu.int/md/meetingdoc.asp?lang=en&parent=T17-TSAG-220110-TD-GEN-1282).

# Activities and achievements of the SPCG

This section summarizes the activities and achievements of the SPCG since its beginning. The SPCG has been reporting its progress to each TSAG meeting, where each progress report contains all SPCG meeting reports since the previous TSAG meeting; the SPCG progress reports are contained in TSAG TDs [495](https://www.itu.int/md/T17-TSAG-190923-TD-GEN-0495), [681](https://www.itu.int/md/T17-TSAG-200210-TD-GEN-0681), [817](https://www.itu.int/md/T17-TSAG-200921-TD-GEN-0817), [960R1](https://www.itu.int/md/T17-TSAG-210111-TD-GEN-0960), [1059R1](https://www.itu.int/md/T17-TSAG-211025-TD-GEN-1059), and [TD1205](https://www.itu.int/md/meetingdoc.asp?lang=en&parent=T17-TSAG-220110-TD-GEN-1205).

## SPCG activities and achievements

1. **Processes and operations**: As per the [SPCG terms of reference](https://www.worldstandardscooperation.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/ToR_SPCG.pdf) on strategic coordination of future standardization work[[1]](#footnote-2),[[2]](#footnote-3),[[3]](#footnote-4),[[4]](#footnote-5), the SPCG developed during the initial meetings a shared understanding of the operations and processes for review and approval of new work proposals by IEC SMB, ISO TMB, and ITU-T TSAG. An internal SPCG process was developed in a form of a working method for the SPCG members to review such proposals received from the Boards. That SPCG working method was applied for the review and coordination of proposed new fields of activity (see below), and the SPCG has documented the processes, the operations and the understanding in an internal guidance document which helps newcomers to the SPCG to be quickly phased-in.
2. **Review and coordination of proposed new fields of activity[[5]](#footnote-6),[[6]](#footnote-7)**: Utilizing above SPCG working methods, the SPCG in total has reviewed 39 new fields of activities such as for proposed new ISO or IEC Technical Committees, new ISO International Workshop Agreements (IWAs), new ITU-T Focus Groups, new ITU-T Joint Coordination Activities, and new/revised ITU-T study group Questions. The review of those proposed new fields of activity encompasses identification of the interests of the other two organizations, and collects the views of its members. 22 proposals found the interest of two or more organizations. In nine cases, the SPCG concluded with a necessity to draft an SPCG recommendation, and the agreed recommendation was sent to the respective Board[[7]](#footnote-8): five SPCG recommendations were sent to ITU-T TSAG, and four SPCG recommendations were sent to ISO TMB. In addition, the SPCG has also established an internal tracking process[[8]](#footnote-9) on the received and processed proposals, where the SPCG is following-up on the reactions/decisions of the Boards upon the proposed new fields. The SPCG defined four KPIs that allow to measure the activities on proposed new fields.
3. **Landscape of existing areas**: As per the SPCG terms of reference on existing standardization work[[9]](#footnote-10),[[10]](#footnote-11),[[11]](#footnote-12) in the three SDOs, the SPCG recognized the need to understand where existing IEC / ISO / ITU-T coordination is taking place and how effective it is, so as for the SPCG to be able to assist in establishing required coordination, or prioritizing areas of work that would require extra support on coordination.
For that purpose, the SPCG developed a landscape in the form of a living document with inputs provided by the central secretariats of the three organizations. The SPCG landscape currently contains 60 common fields of standardization areas/domains or clusters, which are of interest to more than one of the three SDOs. That living document indicates relevant technical standardization groups in ISO, in IEC, in ISO/IEC JTC1, and in ITU-T, and also identifies existing dedicated and other technical coordination groups. This landscape document is regularly reviewed by SPCG members, is updated, and a version is available on the [WSC web page](https://www.worldstandardscooperation.org/what-we-do/standards-programme-coordination-group-spcg/). It should be noted that this is a living document which will be regularly reviewed and updated.
4. **Outreach coordination pilot project on Artificial Intelligence/ Machine Learning**: Utilizing the above landscape document, the SPCG identified urgency and priority to investigate the standardization field in one specific area, and to develop an SPCG trial project for coordination. The SPCG identified the field of Artificial Intelligence/ Machine Learning among the three SDOs as prime for such an outreach coordination pilot project. The prioritisation of the subject area was based on feedback received by the SPCG members following stakeholder consultation. With inputs provided by the central secretariats of the three organizations, a detailed and dedicated landscape was developed in the domain of AI/ML, where information was identified about the relevant technical standardization groups and their subgroups, their published standards, their ongoing work items/work programme, and the tasks/objectives/Questions/study points/items, and where available also the ongoing liaison relationships and liaison activities.
In total, three main groups (ISO/IEC JTC 1/SC 42, ITU-T SG13, and SG16) with 17 sub-groups/Questions were identified to be the main players on general AI/ML matters; while a number (21) of other groups were also identified to have specialized activities, side-activities, or pre-standards activities on AI/ML.
For practical reasons, the SPCG agreed to focus first on the three main groups (ISO/IEC JTC 1/SC 42, ITU-T SG13, and SG16) and their relevant sub-groups, while deferring the process for the other groups to a later point in time, when some experience will have been gained then.
The SPCG has reached-out to the secretariats (of ISO/IEC JTC 1/SC 42, ITU-T SG13, and SG16) to review this landscape and to establish contacts. In a planned next step, the leadership of the respective three main groups will be contacted with the compiled AI/ML landscape, and a roundtable will be organized to identify the coordination needs and to gain feedback.
5. **SPCG sub-groups**: The SPCG has established short-term sub-groups, which assist the SPCG to conduct its work and/or to investigate, plan, or prepare certain topics.
* SPCG sub-group “Enriching recommendations and terms and definitions harmonisation”: This (concluded) sub-group on processes for the future appointment of SPCG Chairs and Secretaries, and membership considerations provided recommendations to the SPCG on the process for the future appointment of SPCG Chairs and Secretaries, and membership considerations.
* SPCG sub-group “Processes for the future appointment of SPCG Chairs and Secretaries, and membership considerations”: This sub-group refines SPCG’s role in developing recommendations to the Boards and enriching the SPCG recommendations.
* SPCG sub-group “Communications”: This sub-group on Communications is tasked to determine the best approach to promote the SPCG activities among the three organizations and their communities; the tasks include to maintain, execute and update the SPCG communications plan, to maintain a close link with the WSC, to promote SPCG via the [WSC web-site](https://www.worldstandardscooperation.org/what-we-do/standards-programme-coordination-group-spcg/), and to develop comms material for the members.
1. **Approved SPCG documents**: The SPCG developed and approved the following documents:
	* Effective coordination among ISO, IEC and ITU-T technical activities (ref: SPCG-32D). This document was disseminated to the three Boards that disseminated it further to technical groups and to members.
	* Communications Plan 2020 and SPCG Communications Work Plan 2020-2021.
2. **Document sharing/access**: The SPCG also discussed and refined working methods and practices on document sharing/access.
3. **Coordination with the IEC-ISO-ITU Joint Smart City Task Force (J-SCTF):** In addition to reporting to the Boards,coordination started between IEC-ISO-ITU Joint Smart City Task Force (J-SCTF) and the SPCG.
4. **Consultations on planned amendments to Recommendation ITU-T A.23**: TSAG representatives to the SPCG informally consulted SPCG members, and secretariats on TSAG’s planned amendments to Rec. ITU-T A.23.

# SPCG’s response to raised concerns, questions, and proposals

This section uses as input the material contained in [Annex A](#_Annex_B_Summary), and identifies the raised concerns, questions and proposals one by one, and provides SPCG’s response for each issue.

A) Structure of SPCG:

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| Issue 1 | There is no balance interims on the number of representatives from each SDO while it should be noted that the SPCG ToRs calls for “balanced number of representatives from among the TMB, SMB and TSAG members”. It should be noted that ISO has (5 members including the Chair and one secretariat), IEC (5 members and one secretariat), and ITU (4 members and one secretariat). |
| SPCG leadership response | SPCG members are nominated by the TMB, SMB and TSAG. Currently, the SPCG is fairly balanced in its representation – TSAG has four representatives, plus the SPCG Secretary and is of course welcome to nominate an additional expert, to bring the number of experts to five.The SPCG has recognized the need to clarify and provide guidance on certain elements with respect to SPCG membership and the process for the selection and election of the SPCG Chair. A dedicated SPCG subgroup was created to investigate and to propose guidance, which has been approved by SPCG (Important note: this does not impact the ToR approved by the Boards, it is additional guidance for SPCG operation):SPCG members shall be appointed by their respective parent technical management board ISO Technical Management Board (ISO TMB), IEC Standardization Management Board (IEC SMB) and the ITU-T Telecommunication Standardization Advisory Group (TSAG) in accordance with their selection processes.ISO TMB, IEC SMB and TSAG may appoint up to five members per each organisation for the SPCG for a term of office of two years. The members may be re-appointed by their respective boards.The secretaries of TMB, SMB and TSAG are permanent members of the SPCG, and do not count in the size of the representative’s delegation.The SPCG Chair is neutral and impartial, and hence, does not count in the size of the respective Board delegation.Furthermore, and perhaps most importantly, the SPCG is only a consultative body with no decision making responsibility. It only provides recommendations to the TMB, SMB and SPCG and the recommendations are arrived at by consensus. |

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| Issue 2 | Non-voting members: the current SPCG structure includes an expert from BSI as a non-voting member, can you please elaborate on what is role of non-voting members? How are they appointed? Can all SDOs suggest non-voting members? Is there a limitation of non-members that can be designated? |
| SPCG leadership response | An observer (from the Chair’s team) to assist the Chair was invited to attend some of the SPCG meetings with the agreement of the SPCG members. Further to the TSAG comment, the Chair has advised the SPCG that no observers will participate in any future meetings of the SPCG. |

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| Issue 3 | There is no balance interims of geographical distribution among ITU representatives. |
| SPCG leadership response | It is the responsibility of the respective Boards to nominate experts to the SPCG. It is our understanding that the TSAG delegation to SPCG was chosen carefully with the objective of providing best possible expertise and experience on collaboration with ISO and IEC, to aim at achieving geographical balance, and gender balance, within the given resources and available capacities; and hence three geographical regions could be covered.It is the discretion of TSAG to define the criteria for selection of its representatives to the SPCG. A fifth SPCG representative could be appointed. |

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| Issue 4 | Concerning the Chairmanship, it should be noted that according to SPCG ToRs, “the Chair to be selected by the joint task force members from among those members, serving a two-year term. Subsequent chairs selected shall be from a different organization than the immediate previous chair to ensure equal representation among the three organizations in the leadership of the joint task force. |
| SPCG leadership response | Ms. Richardson’s election for a second two-year term followed an initial discussion amongst the Secretaries of TMB, SMB and TSAG and a proposal and consultation with the SPCG. Due to the complex nature of the SPCG activities and the current status of progress of activities in the SPCG, which are still at an early stage, the SPCG recommended to appoint the existing SPCG Chair for an additional exceptional (two year) term. In addition, no other candidates expressed interested in the Chair position. The TSAG representatives to SPCG had no issues or concerns with the Ms. Richardson’s leadership. Secretary’s note: During her tenure as Chair, Ms. Richardson has been neutral, fair and reasonable in her approach.It should be noted that the ISO/TMB and IEC/SMB have both endorsed the additional term of the current Chair, during the meetings in September / October 2021.The SPCG recognized that the process of appointment of the SPCG Chair and Secretary needed additional clarity. Consequently, the SPCG created a subgroup which was tasked to review and to clarify the rules of procedure and processes related to the Chair, Secretary, and membership election. |

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| Issue 5 | Proposals:Since the first SPCG two years’ term is over, it is the right time for TSAG to look at these points before the 2nd term starts. |
| SPCG leadership response | The TSAG should always keep abreast with the operation of the SPCG. The SPCG has presented updates and reports to the TSAG at every TSAG meeting and the reports have been duly noted with no concerns expressed. The SPCG leadership and TSAG nominated representatives would be happy to discuss how to strengthen communication between TSAG and the SPCG. |

B) SPCG Work:

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| Issue 6 | Purpose of SPCG, in (TD1059 att8) the purpose seems clearly to go beyond the ToRs of the SPCG. First “Standards need to be coherent, and not in conflict/duplicated, if they are to be adopted”. The ToRs were heavily debated and this purpose goes beyond the ToRs. |
| SPCG leadership response | The slide relates to “The role of the SPCG” in the slideset (TSAG-TD1205). The point is noted and understood – in future we will ensure that the messaging is aligned with the SPCG ToR. |

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| Issue 7 | SPCG established subgroups on different topics (SPCG’s role in developing recommendations, SPCG membership, Communications) and recently SPCG started a new work on Outreach – Artificial intelligence. The scope and purpose seems not to be clear. Is SPCG trying to duplicate the work of the Advisory Boards, such as TSAG in the case of ITU-T? |
| SPCG leadership response | The SPCG is internally operating some subgroups, which aim to progress the work on various items in-between the SPCG meetings for the SPCG to more effectively undertake its activities. The sub-groups are ad-hoc deliberative groups that help develop specific insights for the SPCG’s consideration as a whole.In relation to the ‘Outreach – Artificial intelligence’ – one of the tasks of SPCG is to review existing areas of standardization and develop recommendations for effective coordination[[12]](#footnote-13). Using the SPCG landscape of existing areas/fields (see issue 8), the SPCG selected Artificial Intelligence/Machine Learning as the field of utmost priority with the purpose to develop a plan to identify the need for coordination on complementary or overlapping work programmes across two or all three organizations (as appropriate) as a first step to enhancing coordination efforts.So far, this pilot project still is in a planning phase where consultations have taken place at the secretariat level. The plan is to involve next the leadership teams of the Committees and study groups in the consultations and coordination activities; see also section 2 d).The SPCG activities on its landscape and on Artificial Intelligence/Machine Learning aim to assist the Boards by identifying and recommending opportunities and mechanisms for coordination, collaboration and joint work to the respective technical boards (SMB, TMB, TSAG) as mandated in the SPCG ToR. |

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| Issue 8 | Coordination of ISO/IEC/ITU-T existing Fields, the Mapping exercise was not shared with ITU-T SGs. Can you please explain how this document has been developed? We would like to seek some clarifications and we would like to share our concerns on the lack of transparency on how these activities seem to be conducted. |
| SPCG leadership response | The SPCG, driven by the mandate to coordinate existing standardization work in the three SDOs (see also issue 10), is trying to identify the need for coordination on complementary or overlapping work programmes across two or all three organizations (as appropriate) as a first step to enhancing coordination efforts. For that purpose, the SPCG has started developing internally an initial landscape of topical areas/fields of existing areas for coordination which are of interest to more than one of the SDOs. Inputs to that landscape were contributed by the three secretariats and by review and feedback from SPCG members. This activity of the landscape is work in progress under ongoing review where the landscape is maintained in a live document and updated as required; see section 2 c).The SPCG leadership recognizes the need to seek feedback and inputs, and will encourage its SPCG members to engage and consult as required (see also issue 13). |

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| Issue 9 | Proposals:* It is requested to include information on relevant ITU-T Groups if the matter pertains to their field before agreeing on any related SPCG recommendations. The recommendations issued by SPCG seem to lack of the necessary background information on ITU’s activities and we would like to echo our concern.
* It is requested to amend the purpose of SPCG in order to be in line with SPCG ToRs.
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| SPCG leadership response | The SPCG’s develops recommendations to the three boards and it is up to the relevant boards to consider and act upon those recommendations.On the first proposal, TSAG representatives in SPCG agree to significantly improve the consultations, in particular with ITU-T groups, on any matters that pertain to their domains (see also issue 13).On the second proposal, and as explained in issue 6, it is not intended to revise the SPCG ToR; the slide related to “The role of the SPCG” in the slideset (TSAG-TD1205) is aligned with the SPCG ToR. |

C) Points concerning SG20 and J-SCTF

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| Issue 10 | * TSB presented information on the Joint task force at the JCA meeting held on 10 April 2019 (extract from JCA report is copied below)
	+ TSB: Joint IEC-ISO-ITU Smart Cities Task Force [[JCAandSC&C-IoT-I-390](https://www.itu.int/ifa/t/sftp/jcaiot/1904/In/jca-iotscc-i-390_joint_IEC-ISO-ITU_Smart_Cities_Task_Force.zip)]The document was presented by TSB. A brief overview of the World Smart City Forum (WSCF) was given.Following on the TSAG decision to create the IEC SMB/ISO TMB/ITU-T TSAG Standardization Programme Coordination Group (SPCG), groundwork for the formation of the Joint IEC-ISO-ITU Smart Cities Task Force was laid with the development of the draft Terms of Reference (ToR).
	+ During the JCA-IoT and SC&C meeting some concerns were raised about the overlapping of work.
	+ It was decided that the meeting would not revise the ToR due to time constraint. A drafting group session on the ToR of the Joint Task Force will be held on 16 April 2019 and will report on its outcome to ITU-T SG20 closing plenary.
* SG20 reviewed the ToR that received from TSB during its April 2019 meeting. SG20 was not involved in the preparation of the ToR. The ToR were reviewed and agreed in SG20 (as contained in TD1301-R1).
* During the SG20 closing plenary, it was agreed to send a liaison statement to TSAG on the Term of references of the Joint IEC-ISO-ITU Smart Cities Task Force. The LS was approved by correspondence [(link to the LS document for your info).](https://www.itu.int/ifa/t/2017/ls/sg20/sp16-sg20-oLS-00136.zip)
* It should be also noted that when the ToR of the J-SCTF were discussed and approved in SG20, the SPCG did not exist.
* Saying that, on what legal ground the SPCG should be acting in the role of a clearinghouse for J-SCTF? Why J-SCTF should consult with SPCG prior to J-SCTF bringing matters to the Boards? Why SPCG advocates a role to provide guidance and to provide feedback to J-SCTF?As you know SG20 designated some experts to participate in the J-SCTF (including myself). SG20 never took a decision to participate in a task force noting that another body, namely SPCG will oversee its work. Therefore, I am very much concerned and I think that SG20 should be given the opportunity to take a decision if it still wants to participate in the J-SCTF noting the strong role that SPCG has. None of the SG20 members designated to participate in the J-SCTF have any authority to take such a decision.
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| SPCG leadership response | The SPCG can only respond to the final bullet in the points raised; the other items being outside of the scope of SPCG.The “legal” basis and grounds of the considerations herein are the terms of references of the SPCG and of the J-SCTF.For clarity, there is no ‘legal ground’ for the role of the SPCG in relation to J-SCTF. The SPCG ToR identifies the concept of topic-specific Joint Technical Coordination Groups (JTCGs)[[13]](#footnote-14) in those cases where existing complementary or overlapping work programmes require more formal coordination. The J-SCTF could actually be considered as an example of such a JTCG in the field of smart cities and as noted this TF pre-dated the SPCG. The J-SCTF is looking into the issue of overlap within the field of smart cities, and where necessary to be conducting technical coordination in the field of smart cities specifically in scope of IEC, ISO, and ITU-T. In addition, the World Standards Cooperation (WSC) of ISO, IEC and ITU-T has asked the SPCG to conduct a review of the J-SCTF in accordance with the WSC Work Programme (approved March 2021)[[14]](#footnote-15). The SPCG, as mandated by its ToR, with respect to strategic coordination of future standardization work and to existing standardization work, is to * Share information on new subject areas of strategic interest on proposals for new fields of technical activity under consideration in SMB, TMB and TSAG;
* Discuss and review new areas of strategic interest or proposals for new fields of activity from all three organizations and identify common interests and future challenges;
* Identify and recommend opportunities and mechanisms for coordination, collaboration and joint work to the respective technical boards (SMB, TMB, TSAG);
* Review input provided by the central offices of the three organizations on potentially overlapping topics and determine which aspects require coordination;
* Encourage IEC, ISO and ITU-T to promote informal coordination between the leaders of impacted committees working on complementary or overlapping work programmes across two or all three organizations (as appropriate) as a first step to enhancing coordination efforts;

As such, the SPCG has a vital interest to be informed on the situation and progress of any coordination activities among IEC, ISO, and ITU-T concerning both existing as well as future fields of technical activities. Therefore, the SPCG is kindly seeking the cooperation of J-SCTF to consider using informal communications to inform the SPCG on J-SCTF activities and progress in the form of an exchange; this is not a one-way activity and the leadership of the J-SCTF expressed interest in utilising SPCG as a ‘clearing house’ for ideas and suggestions which were not related to the official reporting to the Board and where the leadership require some advice.The J-SCTF is clearly mandated to report to the three Boards, as is required in the J-SCTF ToR and as is confirmed by TSAG, the SPCG strongly desires to be kept informed on the progress of the J-SCTF and to provide support to the J-SCTF wherever it is feasible to do so. The SPCG, having oversight of all coordination activities and relevant instruments as applicable to the three SDOs, kindly offers its humble expertise and advocacy to provide guidance and/or advisory or feedback as necessary or as desired to J-SCTF as part of the mutual collaboration between the two groups, so as to handle any issues bilaterally, where possible. Ultimately, the J-SCTF reports to the Boards. |

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| Issue 11 | In addition, in the ToR of the J-SCTF, it is stated that the J-SCTF will report to the three boards so why SPCG now requests that the J-SCTF should report first to SPCG? Can this matter be legally clarified? |
| SPCG leadership response | Please see issue 10 beforehand. |

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| Issue 12 | Conclusions1. Chairmanship of SPCG should be rotating more often than 4 years – otherwise ITU turn might be in 8 years (4 ISO and 4 IEC).
2. J-SCTF Smart Cities: J-SCTF shall report to the Governing bodies of the three SDOs, and NOT through SPCG.
3. There seems to be no participation by the TSAG representatives in SPCG consultations. Most voices are being driven from IEC and ISO.
4. ISO secretariat sent an invitation to ISO membership without prior consultations to invite its members to U4SSC.
5. Coordination with IEC and ISO is good but not this way – J-SCTF are getting into details of ITU-T work.

Note: the conclusion above does not cover the proposals listed above in “proposal section”. |
| SPCG leadership response | 1. See issue 4. Please also note there is no order of Chair (e.g. ISO – IEC – ITU) – ITU could of course be the Chair for the next term.
2. See issue 10.
3. The TSAG representatives have been wholly engaged in the activities of the SPCG since its establishment and have regularly shared updates at TSAG meetings. TSAG representative also participate in the review of proposed new fields of activity, and in the SPCG meetings.
4. This issue does not pertain to the SPCG.
5. This issue appears to be within the remit of J-SCTF and is to be addressed there to find a suitable level of depth as is appropriate, necessary and acceptable to all the three SDOs.
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| Issue 13 | The need to involve ITU-T study groups and/or their leadership in the works of the SPCG |
| SPCG leadership response | The ITU-T delegation in SPCG will want to be consulting with ITU-T study groups and their leadership teams on all relevant matters, so as to* solicit input from constituencies on new work item proposals, issues, interests and emerging areas, bring them forward for discussion and, when necessary take appropriate action;
* comply with the requirements outlined in the SPCG Terms of Reference and with the ISO, IEC and ITU-T Codes of Conduct;
* act as ambassadors for the SPCG and specifically the SPCG agreed recommendations at their respective board meetings;

and to obtain feedback on matters of relevant coordination, and to be open for any inputs into the SPCG. |

# References

* [TSAG-TD495](https://www.itu.int/md/T17-TSAG-190923-TD-GEN-0495) (2019-09) (ITU-T representatives to IEC SMB/ISO TMB/ITU-T TSAG Standardization Programme Coordination Group (SPCG)): Report of IEC SMB/ISO TMB/ITU-T TSAG Standardization Programme Coordination Group (SPCG)
* [TSAG-TD681](https://www.itu.int/md/T17-TSAG-200210-TD-GEN-0681) (2020-02) (ITU-T representatives to IEC SMB/ISO TMB/ITU-T TSAG Standardization Programme Coordination Group (SPCG)): Report of IEC SMB/ISO TMB/ITU-T TSAG Standardization Programme Coordination Group (SPCG)
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* [TSAG-TD960R1](https://www.itu.int/md/T17-TSAG-210111-TD-GEN-0960) (2021-01) (ITU-T representatives to IEC SMB/ISO TMB/ITU-T TSAG Standardization Programme Coordination Group (SPCG)): Report on progress made by the IEC SMB/ISO TMB/ITU-T TSAG Standardization Programme Coordination Group (SPCG)
* [TSAG-TD1059R1](https://www.itu.int/md/T17-TSAG-211025-TD-GEN-1059) (2021-10) (ITU-T representatives to IEC SMB/ISO TMB/ITU-T TSAG Standardization Programme Coordination Group (SPCG)): Report on progress made by the IEC SMB/ISO TMB/ITU-T TSAG Standardization Programme Coordination Group (SPCG).
* [TSAG-TD1205](https://www.itu.int/md/meetingdoc.asp?lang=en&parent=T17-TSAG-220110-TD-GEN-1205) (2021-12) (ITU-T representatives to IEC SMB/ISO TMB/ITU-T TSAG Standardization Programme Coordination Group (SPCG)): Report on progress made by the IEC SMB/ISO TMB/ITU-T TSAG Standardization Programme Coordination Group (SPCG).
* [TSAG-TD1282](https://www.itu.int/md/meetingdoc.asp?lang=en&parent=T17-TSAG-220110-TD-GEN-1282) (2022-01) (ITU-T representatives to IEC SMB/ISO TMB/ITU-T TSAG Standardization Programme Coordination Group (SPCG)): Assessment of SPCG’s activities
* SPCG Terms of Reference: <https://www.worldstandardscooperation.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/ToR_SPCG.pdf>
* revised IEC/ISO/ITU World Standards Cooperation (WSC) Terms of Reference, 2020: [TSAG-TD895-R1](https://www.itu.int/dms_pub/itu-t/md/17/tsag/td/200921/GEN/T17-TSAG-200921-TD-GEN-0895%21R1%21ZIP-E.zip)
* WSC Work Programme; see [TSAG-TD1062](https://www.itu.int/md/T17-TSAG-211025-TD-GEN-1062).

# Annex AITU-T SG20 Chairman observation and comments on“Standardization Programme Coordination Group (SPCG)”

A) Structure of SPCG:

1. There is no balance interims on the number of representatives from each SDO while it should be noted that the SPCG ToRs calls for “balanced number of representatives from among the TMB, SMB and TSAG members”. It should be noted that ISO has (5 members including the Chair and one secretariat), IEC (5 members and one secretariat), and ITU (4 members and one secretariat).
2. Non-voting members: the current SPCG structure includes an expert from BSI as a non-voting member, can you please elaborate on what is role of non-voting members? How are they appointed? Can all SDOs suggest non-voting members? Is there a limitation of non-members that can be designated?
3. There is no balance interims of geographical distribution among ITU representatives.
4. Concerning the Chairmanship, it should be noted that according to SPCG ToRs, “the Chair to be selected by the joint task force members from among those members, serving a two-year term. Subsequent chairs selected shall be from a different organization than the immediate previous chair to ensure equal representation among the three organizations in the leadership of the joint task force.

Proposals:

Since the first SPCG two years’ term is over, it is the right time for TSAG to look at these points before the 2nd term starts.

B) SPCG Work:

1. Purpose of SPCG, in (TD1059 att8) the purpose seems clearly to go beyond the ToRs of the SPCG. First “Standards need to be coherent, and not in conflict/duplicated, if they are to be adopted”. The ToRs were heavily debated and this purpose goes beyond the ToRs.
2. SPCG established subgroups on different topics (SPCG’s role in developing recommendations, SPCG membership, Communications) and recently SPCG started a new work on Outreach – Artificial intelligence. The scope and purpose seems not to be clear. Is SPCG trying to duplicate the work of the Advisory Boards, such as TSAG in the case of ITU-T?
3. Coordination of ISO/IEC/ITU-T existing Fields, the Mapping exercise was not shared with ITU-T SGs. Can you please explain how this document has been developed? We would like to seek some clarifications and we would like to share our concerns on the lack of transparency on how these activities seem to be conducted.

Proposals:

* It is requested to include information on relevant ITU-T Groups if the matter pertains to their field before agreeing on any related SPCG recommendations. The recommendations issued by SPCG seem to lack of the necessary background information on ITU’s activities and we would like to echo our concern.
* Its request to amend the purpose of SPCG in order to be in line with SPCG ToRs.

C) Points concerning SG20 and J-SCTF

* TSB presented information on the Joint task force at the JCA meeting held on 10 April 2019 (extract from JCA report is copied below)
	+ TSB: Joint IEC-ISO-ITU Smart Cities Task Force [[JCAandSC&C-IoT-I-390](https://www.itu.int/ifa/t/sftp/jcaiot/1904/In/jca-iotscc-i-390_joint_IEC-ISO-ITU_Smart_Cities_Task_Force.zip)]The document was presented by TSB. A brief overview of the World Smart City Forum (WSCF) was given.
	Following on the TSAG decision to create the IEC SMB/ISO TMB/ITU-T TSAG Standardization Programme Coordination Group (SPCG), groundwork for the formation of the Joint IEC-ISO-ITU Smart Cities Task Force was laid with the development of the draft Terms of Reference (ToR).
	+ During the JCA-IoT and SC&C meeting some concerns were raised about the overlapping of work.
	+ It was decided that the meeting would not revise the ToR due to time constraint. A drafting group session on the ToR of the Joint Task Force will be held on 16 April 2019 and will report on its outcome to ITU-T SG20 closing plenary.
* SG20 reviewed the ToR that received from TSB during its April 2019 meeting. SG20 was not involved in the preparation of the ToR. The ToR were reviewed and agreed in SG20 (as contained in TD1301-R1).
* During the SG20 closing plenary, it was agreed to send a liaison statement to TSAG on the Term of references of the Joint IEC-ISO-ITU Smart Cities Task Force. The LS was approved by correspondence [(link to the LS document for your info).](https://www.itu.int/ifa/t/2017/ls/sg20/sp16-sg20-oLS-00136.zip)
* It should be also noted that when the ToR of the J-SCTF were discussed and approved in SG20, the SPCG did not exist.
* Saying that, on what legal ground the SPCG should be acting in the role of a clearinghouse for J-SCTF? Why J-SCTF should consult with SPCG prior to J-SCTF bringing matters to the Boards? Why SPCG advocates a role to provide guidance and to provide feedback to J-SCTF? As you know SG20 designated some experts to participate in the J-SCTF (including myself). SG20 never took a decision to participate in a task force noting that another body, namely SPCG will oversee its work. Therefore, I am very much concerned and I think that SG20 should be given the opportunity to take a decision if it still wants to participate in the J-SCTF noting the strong role that SPCG has. None of the SG20 members designated to participate in the JTF have any authority to take such a decision.
* In addition, in the ToR of the J-SCTF, it is stated that the J-SCTF will report to the three boards so why SPCG now requests that the J-SCTF should report first to SPCG? Can this matter be legally clarified?

Conclusions

1. Chairmanship of SPCG should be rotating more often than 4 years – otherwise ITU turn might be in 8 years (4 ISO and 4 IEC).
2. J-SCTF Smart Cities: J-SCTF shall report to the Governing bodies of the three SDOs, and NOT through SPCG.
3. There seems to be no participation by the TSAG representatives in SPCG consultations. Most voices are being driven from IEC and ISO.
4. ISO secretariat sent an invitation to ISO membership without prior consultations to invite its members to U4SSC.
5. Coordination with IEC and ISO is good but not this way – J-SCTF are getting into details of ITU-T work.

Note: the conclusion above does not cover the proposals listed above in “proposal section”.

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1. SPCG ToR: Strategic coordination of future standardization work [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. SPCG ToR: • Share information on new subject areas of strategic interest on proposals for new fields of technical activity under consideration in SMB, TMB and TSAG [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. SPCG ToR: • As soon as any area of strategic interest or proposals for new fields of technical activity of potential interest to more than one organization have been suggested / submitted to ISO, IEC or ITU-T, staff from those organizations shall inform the SPCG chair and secretary of the area of strategic interest or new fields of technical activity that have been suggested/submitted and will be under consideration within the TMB, SMB and TSAG at their next meetings or by correspondence. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. SPCG ToR: • information on these areas of strategic interest and proposals for new fields of technical activity will be shared with all SPCG members, to indicate if they feel the subjects are of common interest to more than one organization and would require coordination or joint work. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. SPCG ToR: • If there is general consensus among the SPCG members that a subject is of common interest to more than one organization, the SPCG will develop a specific recommendation for how to proceed on coordination, collaboration or joint work. These tasks shall take no more than two weeks to complete. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. SPCG ToR: • Proposals for new areas of technical activity may proceed through member voting or review and comment in ISO, IEC and ITU-T, but the SPCG’s recommendations on coordination or joint work must be provided in a timely manner for TMB, SMB and TSAG meetings or for correspondence actions where final decisions will be taken on the proposals. In this way, the TMB, SMB and TSAG can take into account the SPCG’s recommendations when deciding on structures or other approaches to pursue the standards development. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. SPCG ToR: • All SPCG recommendations are circulated to TMB, SMB and TSAG for information or action. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. SPCG ToR: The relevant decision-making body shall inform the task force on the decision taken. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
9. SPCG ToR: Existing Standardization Work [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
10. SPCG ToR: • Review input provided by the central offices of the three organizations on potentially overlapping topics and determine which aspects require coordination; [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
11. SPCG ToR: • Encourage IEC, ISO and ITU-T to promote informal coordination between the leaders of impacted committees working on complementary or overlapping work programmes across two or all three organizations (as appropriate) as a first step to enhancing coordination efforts; [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
12. SPCG ToR: Existing Standardization Work

The SPCG shall: In this context, the dictionary definition of “recommendation” applies.

	* Review input provided by the central offices of the three organizations on potentially overlapping topics and determine which aspects require coordination;
	* Encourage IEC, ISO and ITU-T to promote informal coordination between the leaders of impacted committees working on complementary or overlapping work programmes across two or all three organizations (as appropriate) as a first step to enhancing coordination efforts;
	* Recommend the creation of topic-specific Joint Technical Coordination Groups (JTCGs) in those cases where existing complementary or overlapping work programmes require more formal coordination. The Task Force further recommends that any JTCGs be made up of the leadership of the impacted committees across two or all three organizations (as appropriate) and be given a clear mandate to coordinate on technical issues. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
13. SPCG ToR: • Recommend the creation of topic-specific Joint Technical Coordination Groups (JTCGs) in those cases where existing complementary or overlapping work programmes require more formal coordination. The Task Force further recommends that any JTCGs be made up of the leadership of the impacted committees across two or all three organizations (as appropriate) and be given a clear mandate to coordinate on technical issues. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
14. WSC Work Programme:
- Invite SPCG to:

	* review the lessons learnt form the Joint Task Force on Smart Cities as provided in WSC/200.
	* identify an issue of common interest where the three organization develop an analysis of standardisation activities and proposed next steps.
	* Work with the respective departments or governing bodies within IEC, ISO and ITU to:
		+ develop common subject-specific packages to build awareness about the coherence and coordination of the three organizations work,
		+ identify potential training opportunities to support the deployment of standards in this area around the world (any training opportunities would subsequently be considered, and material developed by the three organizations’ relevant training departments), and
		+ develop and promote the success stories / case studies.Provide updates to WSC on the activities and lessons learnt on a regular basis. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)